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PLACEMENT CRITERIA AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH 1 AND 21, SPRING 1965.

BY- GOLD, BENJAMIN K.
LOS ANGELES CITY COLL., CALIF.

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DATA ON 58 REMEDIAL ENGLISH 21 AND 128 ENGLISH 1 STUDENTS WERE FURNISHED BY THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT OF LOS ANGELES CITY COLLEGE. TABLES WERE CONSTRUCTED INDICATING SCHOOL AND COLLEGE APTITUDE TEST SCORES (SCAT), AND PERFORMANCE IN ANY PREVIOUS COMMUNICATION CLASSES FOR THESE STUDENTS. COMPARISONS ARE MADE AND DIFFERENCES CHARTED BETWEEN THE ENGLISH 21 AND 1 STUDENTS IN PERFORMANCE AND IN VERBAL AREAS. OTHER TABLES SHOW CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN SCAT AND ENGLISH EXPRESSION PERFORMANCES, AND BETWEEN TEST PERFORMANCES AND GRADES. IT WAS FOUND THAT THE SCAT HAD NO USEFULNESS IN PREDICTING ENGLISH 21 GRADES AND LIMITED USEFULNESS IN PREDICTING GRADES IN ENGLISH 1. THE ENGLISH EXPRESSION TEST HAD A CORRELATION OF .44 WITH ENGLISH 1 GRADES AND .52 WITH ENGLISH 21 GRADES. (HS)

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LOS ANGELES CITY COLLEGE

"PLACEMENT CRITERIA AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH 1 AND 21, SPRING, 1965"

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Ben K. Gold
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PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Several Counseling Center research studies (#58-5, 58-16, 59-12, 61-1, 61-6) have considered questions related to placement of students in English 1 and 21, and their subsequent academic performance. Since the last of these studies appeared in 1961, the English Department has had available new editions of the Cooperative English Tests and has raised the question of whether or not use of the newer Cooperative Test of English Expression might be useful in placing the students in the proper course. The purpose of this study is to consider this question and to identify any differences in performance in the courses from those reported earlier.

PROCEDURES OF THE STUDY

The English Department furnished the names and test scores of students in three English 21 and five English 1 classes for the Spring 1965 semester who had taken the Cooperative English Expression Test at the beginning of the semester. Records were checked to obtain SCAT entrance examination scores and performance in any previous LACC communications courses for these students. After the close of the semester, grades in English were obtained. Comparative figures for previous semesters were obtained from the studies mentioned above. Statistics were calculated, analyzed and interpreted as indicated in the following sections.

FINDINGS

Data concerning students in three English 21 classes totaling 58 students and five English 1 classes totaling 128 students were furnished by the English department. Totals smaller than these in the following presentation indicate incomplete data for the students not included.

Table I indicates performance of the students on the SCAT entrance examination (verbal, quantitative, and total raw scores) and the Cooperative Test of English Expression. Figures for all students who took the SCAT for admission in the Fall 1965 semester are included for comparison purposes. It will be observed that the English 1 average performance is at about the national college freshman level in all four situations, with the highest level at the 58th percentile on the SCAT Verbal and the lowest level at the 45th percentile on the English Expression. The English 21 performance is considerably lower, especially in the Verbal areas. English 21 performance on the SCAT Quantitative is about equal to that of all LACC students but below that of English 1 students, although this difference is not as pronounced as that in verbal areas. It can be noted also that performance in the verbal areas by English 1 students shows more variation than that shown by English 21 students. Performance on the SCAT Quantitative shows about the same variability in English 1 as in English 21.

Table II indicates correlation coefficients between SCAT and English Expression performances, and between test performances and grades. Coefficients obtained using data from classes separated by performance on one of the components can be expected to be smaller than those obtained without this restriction. Even noting this, however, it is clear that the SCAT

FINDINGS (continued)

has no usefulness in predicting grades in English 21 and limited usefulness in predicting grades in English 1. The English Expression test is related more strongly to grades in English 21, indicating probably that the concepts being tested are more closely related to course content than is the case with the SCAT Verbal.

Figure 1 shows grade distributions in English 21 and 1 for the Spring 1965 semester, the Fall 1959 semester and the Fall 1958 semester. In Fall 1958 a C in English 21 was required for admission to English 1. Beginning with the Fall 1959 semester, the grade of B was required. Figure 1 reveals little change in the grading practices in English 1, with grades for all three semesters showing an approximately normal distribution. Marked differences can be observed, however, in the distributions for English 21. Grades below C were earned by 48% of the students in 1958, 40% in 1959, and only 24% in 1965. However, in 1958 42% of the students were eligible for English 1, while in 1959 30% of the students were eligible, and in 1965 only 17% were eligible.

Placement in English 1 by the SCAT examination requires a verbal raw score of 28 or more. Placement in English 1 by the English Expression test has been set by the English department at raw score of 46 or above. Table III indicates how students were (or would have been) placed by these examinations. 31% of the students were enrolled in English 21. If the SCAT Verbal had been the sole placing factor, 37% would have been in English 21, while if the Cooperative had been the sole placing factor, 36% would have been placed in English 21. Although these percentages are quite close, the students involved are not the same in each case. 61% of the

FINDINGS (continued)

students would have been placed in the same English class by either test. Of the 39% who would have been placed differently, three out of four would have been placed by SCAT in English 1 and by the Cooperative Test in English 21.

So far, the data includes nothing about previous performances in English. Figure 2 is a scatter diagram indicating performance on SCAT Verbal and English Cooperative according to previous experience in English. The numbers become rather small when such a breakdown is made. Some tentative observations might be made, however. All of the students who were repeating English 1 scored above the SCAT cutoff, but only about half scored above the Cooperative cutoff. The English 1 students who have not taken English 21 appear to show about the same distribution on the Cooperative as those who have. About half of those English 1 students who took English 21 scored above the SCAT cutoff.

Table 1 - Performance of English 1 and 21 Students on Standardized Tests

Test	Group	Number	Mean Raw Score	Est. Nat'l. Coll.Fr. %ile for Mean	Std. Dev.
SCAT V	English 21	51	23.4	23	5.3
	English 1	123	35.3	58	9.1
	LACC F'65	5496	29.8	41	11.5
SCAT Q	English 21	51	27.6	32	8.7
	English 1	123	31.8	46	9.0
	LACC F'65	5496	28.4	34	11.0
SCAT T	English 21	51	50.6	24	8.8
	English 1	123	66.0	49	12.4
	LACC F'65	5496	58.2	35	19.8
Coop. Engl. Expr.	English 21	51	31.6	14	8.8
	English 1	123	44.4	45	12.4

TABLE IIa - Data for Correlation Study

SCAT VERBAL RAW SCORE

Grade		0-6	7-12	13-18	19-24	25-30	31-36	37-42	43-48	49-54	55-60	Total
English 21	A											0
	B			2	4	1 : 0						7
	C		1	4	9	7 : 1	2	1				25
	D			1	2	1 : 0	1					5
	*F			2	1	2 : 0						5
Total			1	9	16	11 : 1	3	1				42
English 1	A									1	4	5
	B					1	7	2	5	3	1	19
	C				5	3 : 9	16	4	4	4		45
	D		1	1	1	1 : 5	10	2		1		22
	*F					1	5	2		2		10
Total			1	1	6	4 : 16	38	10	9	11	5	101

Cutoff

English Expression Raw Score

Grade		0-9	10-18	19-27	28-36	37-45	46-54	55-63	64-72	73-81	82-90	Total
English 21	A											0
	B				3	3	1					7
	C		1	4	11	6	3					25
	D		1	2	2							5
	*F		1	3	1							5
Total			3	9	17	9	4					42
English 1	A					1			1	3		5
	B			1	1	1	8	4	4			19
	C			1	7	15	15	7				45
	D			3	6	7	5	1				22
	*F			1	3	3		1	2			10
Total				6	17	27	28	13	7	3		101

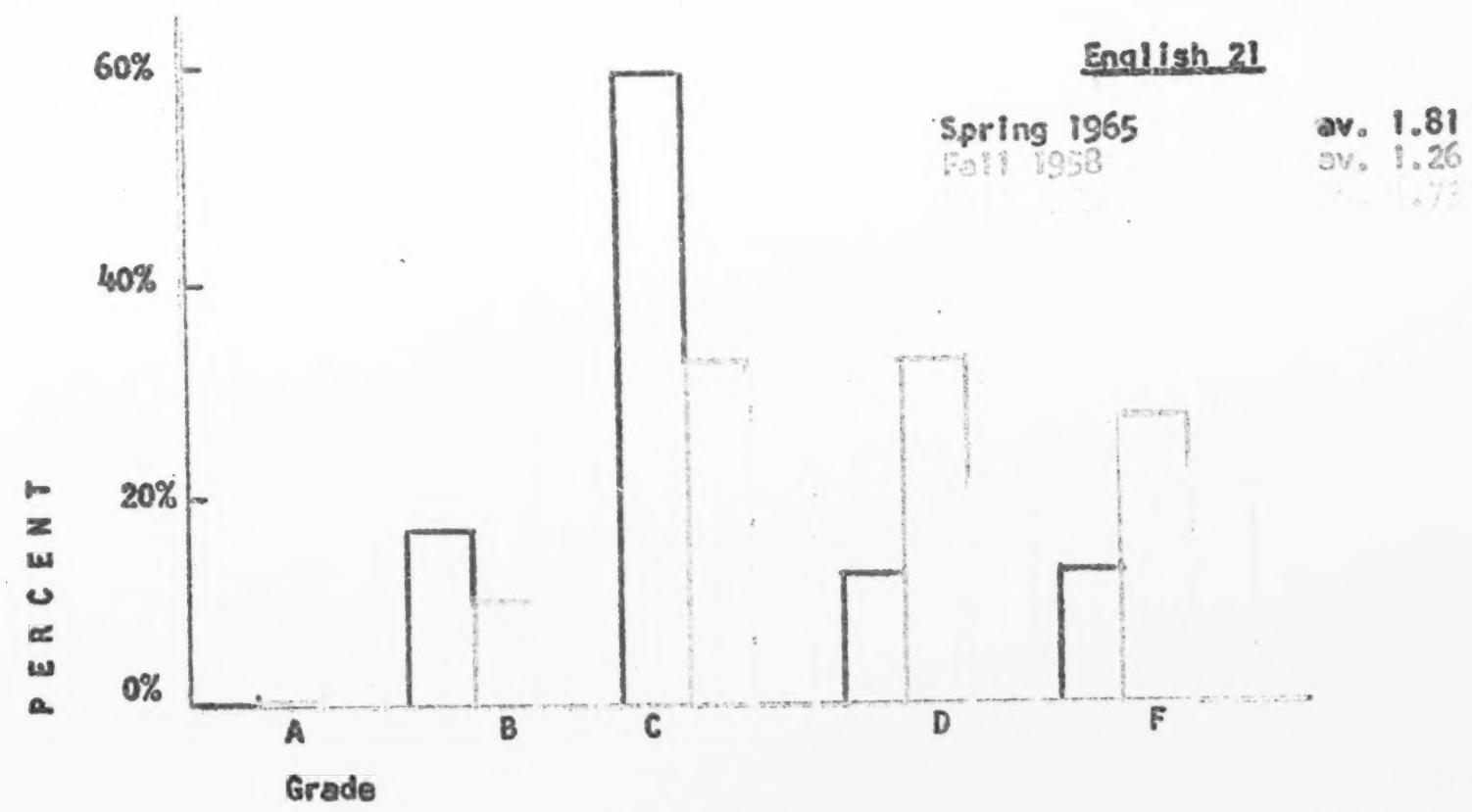
Cutoff

* includes WF's but not Incompletes

TABLE II - Correlation Coefficients (r)

	Number	r
SCAT V vs Coop., English 21 only	51	-0.10
SCAT V vs Coop., English 1 only	123	+0.54
SCAT V vs Coop., combined	174	+0.58
SCAT Q vs Coop., English 21 only	51	-0.01
SCAT Q vs Coop., English 1 only	123	+0.32
SCAT Q vs Coop., combined	174	+0.30
SCAT T vs Coop., English 21 only	51	-0.01
SCAT T vs Coop., English 1 only	123	+0.36
SCAT T vs Coop., combined	174	+0.44
SCAT V vs grade in English 21	42	-0.02
Coop., vs grade in English 21	42	+0.52
SCAT V vs grade in English 1	101	+0.38
Coop., vs grade in English 1	101	+0.44

Figure 1 - Grade Distributions, English 21 and 1



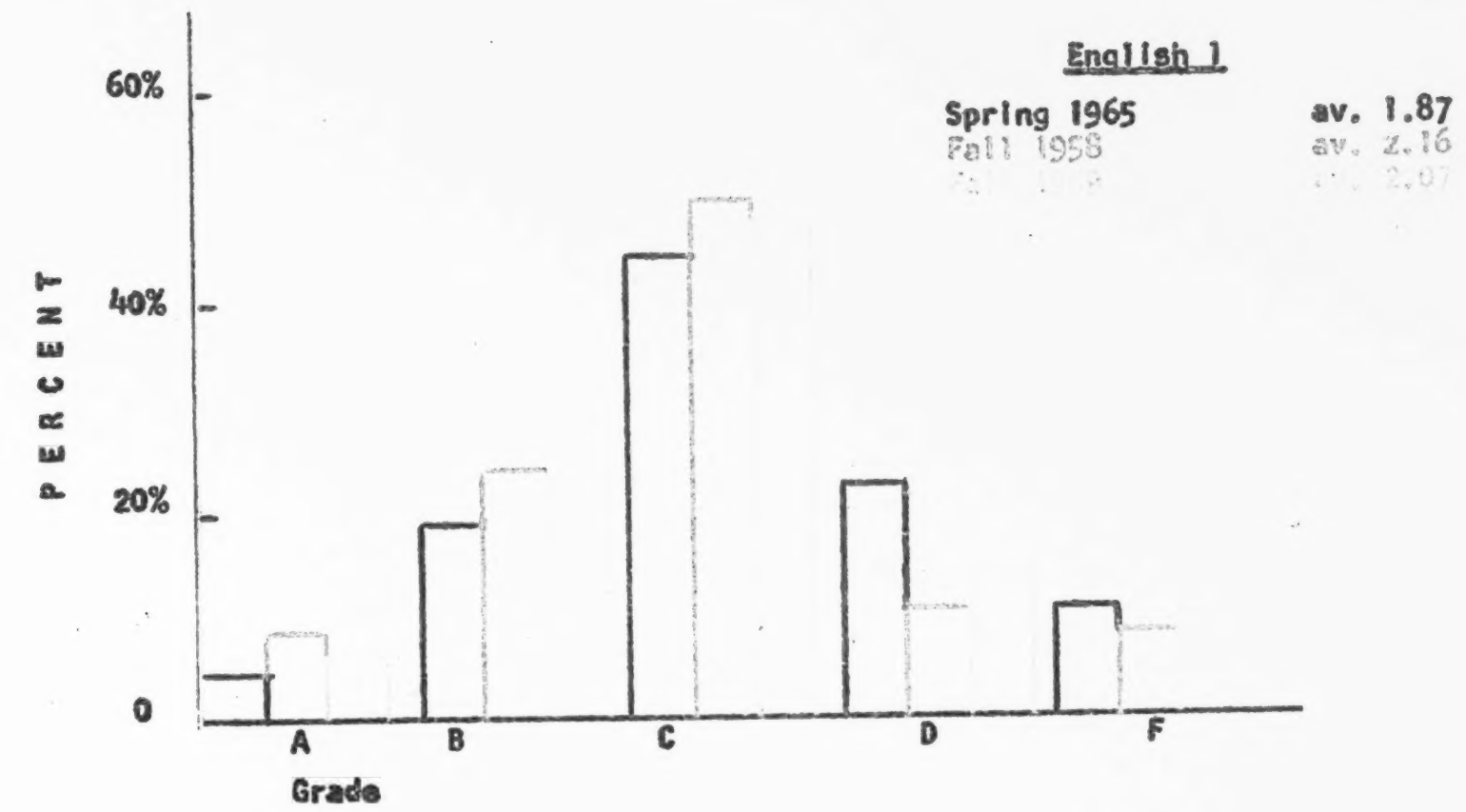


TABLE III - Placement in English 21 and 1 by SCAT Verbal and Cooperative English Expression test

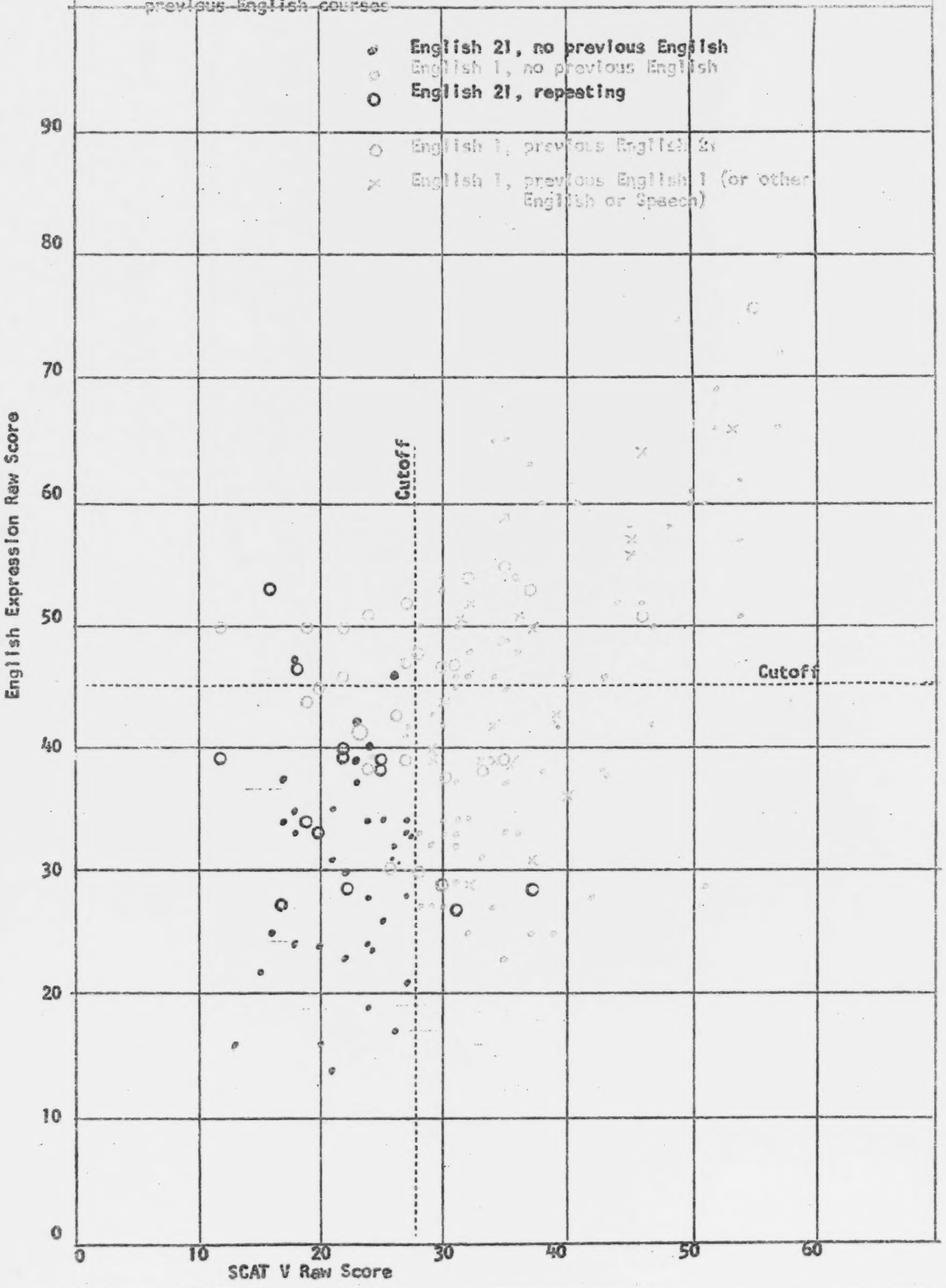
Figures in red indicate actual enrollment in English 1
Figures in purple indicates actual enrollment in English 21

		SCAT V Below Cut-off	SCAT V Above	Totals
Coop. English Expr. Test	Above Cutoff	7 4	54 1	61 5
	Below	10 47	56 5	66 52
	TOTALS	17 51	110 6	127 57

57 students or 31% actually enrolled in English 21
127 " or 69% actually enrolled in English 1
68 " or 37% placed in English 21 by SCAT V
116 " or 63% placed in English 1 by SCAT V
66 " or 36% placed in English 21 by Cooperative
118 " or 64% placed in English 1 by Cooperative

57 students or 31% placed in English 21 by both
55 " or 30% placed in English 1 by both
11 " or 6% placed in English 21 by SCAT, English 1 by Cooperative
61 " or 33% placed in English 1 by SCAT, English 21 by Cooperative

Figure 2.- Performance on SCAT V and Engl. Coop. According to previous English courses



CONCLUSIONS

(1) The average English 1 student performs at about the median for national college freshmen on all the SCAT measures and on the Cooperative Test of English Expression. Considerable variation in performance, especially in verbal areas, can be noted however.

(2) The average English 21 student performs in the lowest quartile, when compared with national college freshmen, in SCAT verbal, SCAT total, and in English Expression, with less variation in performance shown in these areas than that shown by English 1 students. On the SCAT quantitative, the average English 21 student scores at about the level of all entering LACC students.

(3) The Cooperative English Expression test seems to show more predictive validity than the SCAT verbal when used as a device for placing students into English 1 and 21 classes. Whether this advantage is worth the trouble of administering the test is doubtful however, inasmuch as the SCAT is required of all entering students. Also, of course, whether the advantage is real or not depends upon the purposes and objectives of the two courses.

(4) At present only about one in five English 21 students meets the requirement (A or B grade) for enrollment in English 1. This is a drop from Fall 1959 (the first semester a B was required) when the ratio was about one in three.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is suggested that the English Department evaluate the findings of this study and other available evidence in light of (1) the objectives of the English 1 and 21 courses, and (2) the problems concerned with test administration.